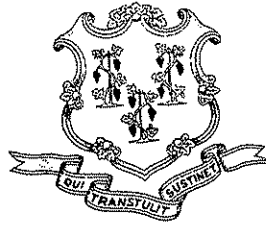


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State of Connecticut
SENATOR DONALD E. WILLIAMS, JR.
Twenty-ninth District
President Pro Tempore

Testimony

SB 635 AAC Electronic Medical Records

Public Health Committee

March 10, 2008

Senator Handley, Representative Sayers, and Members of the Committee:

In many respects, we have a truly amazing healthcare system. Our healthcare professionals are talented, highly trained, and extraordinarily dedicated to their patients. Our researchers continue to make discoveries that push the boundaries of our knowledge and make our lives longer and better. Medical technology continues to advance at an unparalleled rate.

Other industries, however, have proved to be much more nimble than the healthcare industry in taking full advantage of the electronic revolution. No area is more glaring than the continued use of pen-and-paper charting in our medical records. While some hospitals and providers have established themselves as leaders in the use of electronic medical records, it is embarrassing that the use of electronic records is not more widespread.

Electronic medical records have much unrealized potential. Imagine a Connecticut where all providers used electronic medical records that were able to talk to each other. The quality of care would improve, as providers could more easily learn the results of laboratory tests, and could read notes from a subspecialist referral. Costs would decrease, as fewer duplicate tests would be ordered simply because the results of the last test would be available. Patients would be empowered, as they could verify the accuracy and completeness of the medical records. Sadly, we are far from such a Connecticut.

We made significant strides in the last session, with the allocation of \$700,000 to develop a master state-wide plan for health information technology. While we await this plan, there are some important steps we can take.